



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18ST53

Site Name: Abell's Wharf

Prehistoric ☒

Other name(s) Medley's Neck, Mattingly's Farm

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

Early-Late Archaic short-term camp, Early-Late Woodland shell midden, late 17th to mid-18th century farmstead

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 38.2577 Longitude -76.6298

Elevation 6 m Site slope 0

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 10

SCS soil & sediment code

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site ☒

Underwater site ☐

Ethnobotany profile available ☐ Maritime site ☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Unnamed tributary of Breto

Saltwater

Ocean ☐

Estuary/tidal river ☐

Tidewater/marsh ☐

Freshwater

Stream/river ☒

Swamp ☐

Lake or pond ☐

Spring ☒

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site ☐

Woodland site ☐

Archaic site ☐

MD Adena ☐

Early archaic ☒

Early woodland ☒

Middle archaic ☒

Mid. woodland ☒

Late archaic ☒

Late woodland ☒

Contact period site ☐

ca. 1820 - 1860 ☐

ca. 1630 - 1675 ☐

ca. 1860 - 1900 ☐

ca. 1675 - 1720 ☒

ca. 1900 - 1930 ☐

ca. 1720 - 1780 ☒

Post 1930 ☐

ca. 1780 - 1820 ☐

Unknown historic context ☐

Unknown prehistoric context ☐

Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American ☐

Asian American ☐

African American ☐

Unknown ☐

Anglo-American ☒

Other ☐

Hispanic ☐

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural ☒

Domestic

Homestead ☒

Farmstead ☒

Mansion ☐

Plantation ☐

Row/townhome ☐

Cellar ☒

Privy ☐

Industrial

Mining-related ☐

Quarry-related ☐

Mill ☐

Black/metalsmith ☐

Furnace/forge ☐

Other ☐

Transportation

Canal-related ☐

Road/railroad ☐

Wharf/landing ☐

Maritime-related ☐

Bridge ☐

Ford ☐

Educational

Commercial

Trading post ☐

Store ☐

Tavern/inn ☐

Military

Battlefield ☐

Fortification ☐

Encampment ☐

Townsite

Religious

Church/mtg house ☐

Ch support bldg ☐

Burial area

Cemetery ☐

Sepulchre ☐

Isolated burial ☐

Bldg or foundation

Possible Structure ☐

Post-in-ground ☒

Frame-built ☐

Masonry ☐

Other structure ☐

Slave related

Non-domestic agri

Recreational

Midden/dump ☐

Artifact scatter ☐

Spring or well ☐

Unknown ☐

Other context ☐

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken U

Flotation samples taken Y

Other samples taken faunal analysis

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken U

Flotation samples taken U

Other samples taken flotation?



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types	
Clovis	<input type="text"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="text"/>
Palmer	<input type="text"/> 4
Kirk (notch)	<input type="text"/> 2
Kirk (stem)	<input type="text"/>
Le Croy	<input type="text"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="text"/> 4
Guilford	<input type="text"/>
Brewerton	<input type="text"/> 3
Otter Creek	<input type="text"/> 1
Koens-Crispin	<input type="text"/>
Perkiomen	<input type="text"/>
Susquehanna	<input type="text"/>
Vernon	<input type="text"/> 2
Piscataway	<input type="text"/> 7
Calvert	<input type="text"/> 10
Selby Bay	<input type="text"/> 2
Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="text"/>
Madison/Potomac	<input type="text"/> 4
Levanna	<input type="text"/> 1

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="text"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="text"/> 221	Shepard	<input type="text"/>	Keyser	<input type="text"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="text"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="text"/>	Townsend	<input type="text"/> 5	Yeocomico	<input type="text"/>
Selden Island	<input type="text"/>	Watson	<input type="text"/>	Minguannan	<input type="text"/>	Monongahela	<input type="text"/>
Accokeek	<input type="text"/> 709	Mockley	<input type="text"/> 593	Sullivan Cove	<input type="text"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="text"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="text"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="text"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="text"/>		
Vinette	<input type="text"/>	Page	<input type="text"/>	Moyaone	<input type="text"/>		
				Potomac Cr	<input type="text"/> 5		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="text"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="text"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="text"/>	Jackfield	<input type="text"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="text"/> 188	English Brown	<input type="text"/> 97
Borderware	<input type="text"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="text"/>	Whiteware	<input type="text"/>	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="text"/>
Buckley	<input type="text"/> 101	North Devon	<input type="text"/> 195	Porcelain	<input type="text"/> 6	Nottingham	<input type="text"/>
Creamware	<input type="text"/> 2	Pearlware	<input type="text"/> 6			Rhenish	<input type="text"/> 85
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="text"/> 21

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts	
Flaked stone	<input type="text"/> 11959
Ground stone	<input type="text"/> 3
Stone bowls	<input type="text"/> 2
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="text"/> 113
Other lithics (all)	<input type="text"/> 25
Ceramics (all)	<input type="text"/> 1734
Rimsherds	<input type="text"/> 13
Other fired clay	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Modified faunal	<input type="text"/> 5
Unmod faunal	<input type="text"/> 228
Oyster shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uncommon Obj.	<input type="text"/> 1
Other	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="text"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Lithic Material

Jasper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	slate, conglom	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts	
Pottery (all)	<input type="text"/> 2042
Glass (all)	<input type="text"/> 524
Architectural	<input type="text"/> 3436
Furniture	<input type="text"/>
Arms	<input type="text"/> 8
Clothing	<input type="text"/> 5
Personal items	<input type="text"/> 7
Tobacco related	<input type="text"/> 1663
Activity item(s)	<input type="text"/> 42
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Faunal material	<input type="text"/>
Misc. kitchen	<input type="text"/> 290
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Misc.	<input type="text"/> 563
Other	<input type="text"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: <input type="text"/> 320 +/- <input type="text"/> 95 years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>	Sample 2: <input type="text"/> 385 +/- <input type="text"/> 95 years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>	Sample 3: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>
SI-2900: Charcoal samples from F4 shell midden, assoc. w/ceramics, a Selby Bay point, lithic debitage, and animal bone fragments	High	SI-2899: Charcoal samples from pit F40, assoc. w/a Selby Bay point, Mockley and Pope's Creek ceramics, and animal bone fragments and lithic debitage	High		

Sample 4: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>	Sample 5: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>	Sample 6: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>
Sample 7: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>	Sample 8: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>	Sample 9: <input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability <input type="text"/>

☐ Additional radiocarbon results available



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Unknown ☐

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

☐ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Abell's Wharf (18ST53) is a multicomponent site with Early Archaic to Late Woodland period occupations including a possible Early-Middle Woodland village, and a late 17th to mid-18th century farmstead. This site is located on the bank of Breton Bay, south of Leonardtown, in St. Mary's County. It occupies two terraces on a gently sloping bluff top. A ravine is situated to the south and it is bisected by a short valley containing a spring-fed, freshwater stream that terminated in an embayed marsh. The site stretches approximately 182 m to the north of the spring and 91.44 m to the south of it, and it extends inland approximately 137 m. The main soil type for the site is Evesboro loamy sand which becomes gravelly about 4.572 m (15') down the slope of the crest. This is bordered by Matapeake silt loam and Mattapex fine sandy loam to the east and south. For about the last 300 years the site area has been under cultivation. The core of Abell's Wharf archeological site totals about 4-acres in size, but artifact concentrations extend well beyond those limits.

The archeology indicated that occupation of the site area has been almost continuous since at least the Early Archaic period (7,500 BC). The identification of Late Woodland artifacts suggested that continuous development between the prehistoric and historic periods possibly existed at the site. Documentary research indicated that the site was historically split between two land tracts called "Revel's", patented in 1641, and "Revel's Backside", patented in 1663. Early records pertaining to the Abell's Wharf property are scarce due to their loss in the St. Mary's County courthouse fire in the early 19th century. What the documentary evidence revealed was that Robert Ford, Jr. probably established the farm that is today Abell's Wharf when he acquired the property shortly after 1729. The archeological ruins visible today are probably what remain of his house. When Ford died in 1753 he was a wealthy man.

The Abell's Wharf site was first identified by archeologist Dr. B. McMillan during her extensive 1972 survey of St. Mary's County. The major aim of that survey, which was submitted as a Master's thesis, was to collect information on the nature and extent of prehistoric settlement in that portion of St. Mary's County along the Potomac drainage system. Goals of the survey were to establish a testable hypothesis regarding the movement of people and changes in resource procurement and to relate those findings to the general Middle Atlantic prehistoric sequence. At that time, 1 stemmed quartz point, the tip of 1 quartzite knife, 10 quartz and quartzite flakes and chunks (minimum estimate), and 2 grit tempered and net-impressed pottery sherds were surface collected. Residents informed her that the site has been collected by locals for at least the last 50 years.

In 1974, the site was visited by archeologists from the State and the County. The then current landowner, Mr. Abell Clarke, was developing plans for gravel mining a large area including the site. Mr. Clarke received permission to begin the mining operations with the caveat that all sites of archeological significance were to be excavated before any earth moving activities were conducted. Mr. Clarke then arranged to have the site exempted from any mining activities and leased the land to the St. Clement's Island and Potomac River Museum for 189 years. There were 3 main reasons for excavating the site: (1) to evaluate the nature and significance of the site, (2) to encourage its preservation, and (3) to determine what procedures should be used to minimize the loss of significant information. Archeologists from the State of Maryland and from St. Mary's County conducted excavations from late April through May of 1975. Two separate reports were written up detailing the 1975 investigations (1 by the state archeologist and 1 by the county archeologist). These reports were combined in the synthesis in order to provide a complete detail of the excavations.

The 1975 investigations consisted of controlled surface collection and test pit excavation. The site was divided into a grid of 30 m squares which were surface collected. Each 30 m square was sub-divided into twenty-five 6 m squares or four 15 m squares depending on the density of the artifacts within each square. Thirty animal bone fragments were surface collected but were not assigned to either the prehistoric or historic component; therefore, they are not included in the faunal totals in the table above.

Based on the results of the surface collection, 4 areas of the site were subjected to subsurface testing. Four 1 m² test pits (TP1-TP4) were dug. All excavated soils were screen through ¼" hardware cloth. The final phase of investigation involved the machine excavation of 2 parallel trenches and the hand excavation of a 4 m X 6 m unit (TP1) on the upper terrace, and the excavation of three 1 m² squares and a trench in the area of the shell midden on the lower terrace. The plowzone soil from the machine trenches was not screened. Features were mapped as soon as they were exposed and those features that were endangered or looked fragile were excavated. Only 10 of the features were excavated (F2, 3, 6-12, 18), 11 features were partially excavated (F1, 4-5, 16-17, 19, 21, 23-24, 26-27) and 15 features were recorded but not excavated (F15, 20, 22, 25, 28-36).

Between the 2 trenches a large concentration of 18th century materials and features were identified within TP1, the 4 m X 6 m unit. Most of the plowzone was shoveled and discarded, but the lower part was trowelled to the surface of an undisturbed midden. Historic features within the trench included 2 large post holes, one large trash pit, 2 small shell deposits (F1, 27), and an 18th century sheet midden. Possible 'trenches' suggested to the archeologist that a structure may have been located here. Feature 1 was located at the base of the plowzone and continued for a depth of 30-45 cm below the plowzone. TP2 was situated on the east side of the East trench. A large are of soil reddened by fire was encountered below the plowzone and extended beyond the test pit to the east, north, and west. TP3 explored a small concentration of oyster shell that was exposed on the surface. No feature or further shell was identified below the plowzone. TP4, located in the northeast corner of the site, produced several prehistoric artifacts (primarily flakes).

The west trench measured about 70 m in length and ran through concentrations of prehistoric and historic material. Two prehistoric pits containing shell (F5, F7) were identified at the trench's southern end. Also near the southern end of the trench, a shell lens (F6) was uncovered. A series of 5 historic period shallow trenches or "palisade" lines (F32-36) were also exposed at the north end of the trench. These were believed to mark fence lines or walls of pens or small buildings. Ceramic sherds determined to be "Colono-Indian" pottery (or pottery colonial in style and produced by a local tribe) were collected from the surface of the trench.

The east trench was greater than 120 m long and was located further from the water and closer to agricultural fields than the west trench. Prehistoric artifacts were recovered from the north half of the trench including fire-cracked rocks, ceramic sherds and lithic material. A prehistoric shell midden lens (F2) was encountered in the north end of the trench. A concentration of fire-cracked rock (F3) containing lithic debitage was also uncovered in the north part of the trench. A prehistoric shell deposit (F19), either a lens or a pit, was found in the central portion of the trench. Also in the central portion of the trench, a plow-disturbed, prehistoric hearth feature (F18) was identified. The feature soil was screened and all shell was discarded. A number of historic period features were identified in the east trench. Colonial period features included a large pit or cellar, 5 post holes/ molds, and 8 'wall trenches'. Five post holes (F8-12) were clustered together in the central portion of the trench and presumed to represent possible floor supports for a structure. The 8 wall trenches (F13, 15, 17, 21-25) were about 20 cm wide and 10 cm deep, contained small amounts of shell, and were believed to mark fence lines or walls of pens or small buildings. The trash-filled deposit (F26) was thought to represent either a cellar or a storage pit feature below a structure. There was a postmold at the east edge of the



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feature and a wall trench approaching the south edge. Several wrought nails were recovered from the plowzone above the feature.

On the lower terrace, the shell midden (F4) measuring 30 X 18 m was partially excavated. Three 1 m² test units and a 1 m X 5 m trench were excavated. The area of the midden closest to the marsh reached a depth of approximately 3 m before the shell layers terminated.

The artifact analysis conducted on the 1975 material included a stratified random sample of surface collected material; of the 676 squares collected, artifacts from only 138 were used in the analysis. A total of 1,638 prehistoric artifacts were recovered from subsurface excavations and surface collection. There were 1,268 pieces of debitage including utilized flakes, 10 cores, and 15 uniface and 80 biface tools. There were 77 projectile points and point fragments including 3 Palmer corner-notched, 8 Bare Island, 3 Savannah River stemmed, 9 Rossville, 2 Dry Brook, 5 Calvert, 4 Selby Bay/Fox Creek, 1 Brewerton, 1 Levanna, 1 Rossville variant, 1 Kirk corner-notched, 1 Lackawaxen, 1 Lamoka, 1 Madison, 1 Messick, 1 Potomac Creek, 1 Vernon, 1 MacPherson, 16 unidentified stemmed points, 10 unidentified ovate points, 3 unidentified triangular points, and 3 unidentified points. Quartz was the most abundant material represented followed by quartzite, jasper, rhyolite, flint, and chert. There were 10 FCR. There were 12 other lithics including 3 quartzite hammerstones, 2 quartzite grinding stones, 1 sandstone grinding basin, and 6 quartzite choppers. There were 844 ceramic sherds including 34 Pope's Creek, 237 Stony Creek (from VA, these were cataloged as Accokeek in the table above), 78 Prince George cord-marked, 173 Accokeek, 312 Mockley ware ceramics, 5 Townsend series Rappahannock, 5 Potomac Creek. There were 164 animal bone fragments (129 turtle, 1 pig, 1 beaver, 21 raccoon, 10 deer, 1 fish, 1 bird). There were 2 modified faunal objects (bone awls).

A total of 2,306 historic period artifacts were collected from subsurface excavations in test pits, trenches, and surface collection (except ceramics and animal bone). There were 12 activity items (6 harness pieces, 1 iron horseshoe, 1 iron hoe blade, 1 fishhook, 2 staples, 1 fragment of barbed wire). There were 625 architectural items (49 brick fragments, 293 rosehead nails, 52 L-head nails, 9 T-head nails, 116 wrought nails, 3 cut nails, 4 wire nails, 96 unidentified nails, 1 spike, 1 iron handle, 1 iron washer). There were 2 clothing items (1 pewter belt buckle, 1 brass button). There were 781 kitchen-related items (57 Delftware, 2 creamware, 43 unglazed redware, 155 brown-glazed redware, 70 Buckley, 20 buff-bodied earthenware, 31 North Devon, 46 lead-glazed slipware, 17 white stoneware, 38 blue & gray stoneware, 29 British stoneware, 1 iron kettle lug, 2 pewter spoon pieces, 270 animal bone fragments, mainly pig, cow, and fish). There were 183 miscellaneous items (137 unidentified glass fragments, 34 unidentified metal fragments, 1 iron spring, 5 iron strap fragments, and 6 unidentified wire fragments). There were 3 personal items (1 bone comb fragment, 1 iron tinkling cone that is also listed under uncommon objects in the prehistoric artifacts box, 1 Posey ring). There were 698 tobacco items (622 white clay stem fragments, 53 white clay bowl fragments, 17 terra cotta stem fragments, 6 terra cotta bowl fragments). Analysis of the pipe fragments produced several dates within the 17th century. There were 2 arms-related items (1 lead musket ball, 1 shotgun cartridge).

Results of the 1975 archeological investigations revealed the locations of several functional areas. The extensive shell midden (F4) on the lower terrace was explained as either representing an area of secondary refuse of the occupied upper terrace or as an area of primary refuse from the nearby pond and marsh. Early and Middle Woodland ceramics were recovered from the midden. On the upper terrace, activity areas included: flint knapping (concentrations across the site), butchering and hide preparation in the eastern half of the site, the production of wood and bone implements mainly in the western half of the site, and food processing in the southern half of the site. Historic artifacts were clustered in the center of the site grid, with the exception of brick, and dated to the 17th and 18th centuries. The brick tended to cluster in the north-central portion of the site suggesting that a structure has been located in that area with a barnyard and trash dump to the south.

Excavations at Abell's Wharf (18ST53) continued in the late spring and summer of 1976. Most of the work was conducted the week of May 29th – June 6th during the Sixth Annual Maryland Archeological Field Session. Results of work conducted during the last field session (17th and 18th of July) were not included in the original report. In addition to exposing a larger area of the site to new investigation, features identified but not examined in 1975 were re-exposed and excavated. This included features F1, F4, F7, F26, F27, F28-F32. An additional 8 test pits (TP5-TP12) were excavated in 1976. A total of 27 new features were identified, 7 of which were fully excavated, 9 were partially excavated, and 11 were recorded but not excavated.

In TP1, intersecting pits F1, F27, and F39 were partially or completely excavated. The depth of F1 increased moving east-west from 15-50 cm below the 1976 trench floor level. There was a noticeable increase in the density of artifacts in the lower third of the pit, especially in the number of brick and bone fragments. East of F1, F27A, F27B and F39 were intersecting pits. The artifact assemblage from the features pointed to their being temporally and possibly functionally similar. Flotation samples were recovered from F27. A post hole and postmold feature (F37) was excavated in the southwest corner of the test pit. F37 fill contained mostly historic artifacts and bone fragments. F51, F52, and F53 were tightly clustered post hole and postmold features. They were each associated with a historic wall trench and contained historic artifacts. F52 may have had a secondary use as a pit.

Within the west trench, excavation of F7, the prehistoric shell pit, was continued from the previous field season. It appeared that the pit was lined with a layer of whole oyster shell about 5 cm thick and contained primarily lithic debitage. Flotation samples were collected from each 10 cm level within F7. In the center of the trench, 5 shallow prehistoric living floors or sheet middens were exposed (F38, 41, 47-49). The artifact assemblage from the features contained a mix of Early and Middle Woodland items. The rectangular shallow pit designated F30 in 1975 was excavated in 1976 but contained little cultural material. Post hole and postmold features F29 and F31 were excavated in 1976. The features were placed 4 m apart and were associated with wall trenches. Wall trench features F33 and F36 were the only such features excavated in 1976. They both primarily contained prehistoric artifacts.

In the east trench, a prehistoric shell pit (F54) was encountered. F54 contained little cultural material including 1 Mockley sherd. The pit was cut by a historic wall trench (F55). In the center of the trench, excavations of the cellar or trash pit (F26) were continued from the previous year and completed. Flotation and charcoal samples were collected from each 5 cm level excavated. The hard-packed base of the feature suggested its use as a cellar. A thick layer of oyster shell was observed at 50 to 70 cm below the plowzone. Artifacts from F26 date the feature to the late 17th and early 18th centuries. An oval pit identified as F50 in 1976 was excavated. The feature contained some bone but appeared to have been animal-disturbed.

Eight additional wall trenches (F42, 43, 45, 55, 60-63) were uncovered in both the east and west trenches in 1976. Only F33 and F36, recorded during the 1975 survey, were excavated. The wall trenches appeared to lie perpendicular to one another thus delineating small enclosures or sheds.

Eight meters to the south of the east trench a circular pit (F56) was excavated. The fill contained FCR, bone, and prehistoric pottery.

Excavation of the shell midden previously identified as F4 was continued but not completed. Two 1 m squares were excavated adjacent to the 1975 trench. In these squares, the depth of the midden increased moving east to west from 85-145 cm (presumably below ground level?). Within the midden, F40, a small shell pit, was located. Charcoal and flotation samples were collected from F4 and F40.



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Charcoal samples (SI-2900) were collected the Feature 4 shell midden in 1976. The samples derived from layers between 120 cm and 145 cm below the base of the plowzone (5 levels in all). Associated materials included Early and Middle Woodland ceramics, a Selby Bay point, lithic debitage, and animal bone fragments. An uncalibrated date of 320±95 BC was produced. A calibrated age range using Calib 6.0 to 2-sigma is 550-551 BC.

Charcoal samples (SI-2899) were collected from a pit (Feature 40) within the Feature 4 shell midden in 1976. The samples derived from a layer 30-40 cm below the plowzone. Associated materials included a Selby Bay point, Mockely and Pope's Creek ceramics, and animal bone fragments and lithic debitage. This diagnostic artifacts date the pit deposit to the Middle Woodland period. An uncalibrated date of AD 385±95 was produced. A calibrated age range using Calib 6.0 to 2-sigma is AD 321-651.

The artifact inventory detailed in the 1976 report included artifacts from only the F4 shell midden flotation samples (thereby excluding all other flotation samples collected), all the remaining 1975 controlled surface collection material, and the 1976 test unit materials. Not included were items from the remaining flotation samples or artifacts collected from the last 2 days of the field season (the 3rd session).

A total of 10,283 prehistoric artifacts were collected. There were 8,932 pieces of debitage, 39 cores, 12 uniface and 267 biface tools, 1 burin tool, 42 core tools (smaller than choppers, some possibly early stage preforms), 45 preforms. There were 76 projectile points including 2 Morrow Mountain I, 7 Piscataway, 7 Bare Island, 3 Savannah River, 11 Rossville, 4 Calvert, 1 Palmer corner-notched, 1 Kirk corner-notched, 1 Vernon, 1 Otter Creek, 1 Hellgrammite, 1 Madison, 1 Potomac, and 35 unidentified points. There were 6 other lithics (quartzite hammerstones). There were 3 groundstone items (a 3.4 grooved axe, 1 full grooved axe, and 1 slate gorget). There were 2 fragments from steatite bowls. There were 857 ceramic sherds including 12 rim sherds: 75 Accokeek, 224 Stony Creek (listed under Accokeek in the table above), 56 Prince George (49 cord-marked, 7 net-impressed), 187 Pope's Creek, 281 Mockley ware, and 34 unidentified sherds. There was 1 modified faunal object (a bone awl fragment).

A total of 5,661 historic artifacts were collected. There were 19 activity items (4 pins, 1 pair of tweezers, 1 almost complete pair of scissors, 4 iron hoe blades and fragments, 1 wrought iron chain fragments w/ 3 links, 4 bridle bit pieces, 1 harness buckle, 1 spur, 2 fragments of fence wire). There were 2,766 architectural items (1 yellow brick fragment, 1,107 red brick fragments, 952 rosehead nails, 10 L-head nails, 2 T-head nails, 671 wrought nails, 9 cut nails, 13 wire nails, 1 large iron washer). There were 3 clothing items (3 metal buckles). There were 1,534 kitchen-related items (188 tin-glazed earthenware, 97 unglazed redware, 555 glazed redware, 31 Buckley, 101 buff-bodied earthenware, 164 North Devon, 134 lead-glazed Slipware, 15 unidentified white earthenware, 21 white salt-glazed stoneware, 85 Rhenish, 97 English Brown stoneware, 26 Bellarmine ware, 5 Chinese porcelain, 6 pewter utensil handle fragments, 7 knife blades and fragments, 1 knife blade with wooden handle, 1 two-tined fork head). There were 369 miscellaneous items (362 unidentified glass fragments, 2 iron hooks, 1 unidentified latch, possibly for luggage, 1 steel clip, 1 piece of ornamental iron, 2 unidentified metal objects). There was 1 personal item (a wooden bead). There were 964 tobacco items (925 white clay stem and bowl fragments, 16 terra cotta bowl fragments, 22 terra cotta stem fragments (2 with deer motif decoration), 1 piece of a carved bone fragment from a pipe bowl). There were 5 arms-related items (1 shotgun shell cartridge, 2 bullet casings, 1 English flint flake, 1 French flint flake).

Spatial analysis of the 1976 assemblage was conducted in conjunction with the distribution of surface collected artifacts from the 1975 investigations. Results of the analysis indicated several artifact concentrations. Quartz debitage was most highly concentrated in the northeast quadrant of the site grid and quartzite debitage was most highly concentrated in the south-central area of the site grid. It also appeared that there were 2 main ceramic components: Stony Creek and Prince George wares (along with Early Woodland diagnostic points) were concentrated in northeast and south-central areas while Mockley ware (along with Middle Woodland diagnostic points) was concentrated throughout the central and south-central areas of the site. These results suggested that the northeast portion of the site was the major area of occupation during the Early Woodland period and the central portion of the site was the main area of occupation during the Middle Woodland. Additionally, it appeared that the Archaic component may have been more concentrated in the southern areas of the site. The historic spatial distribution identified in 1975 was not significantly altered during the 1976 analysis.

It is indicated that excavations continued in 1977 and 1978 but no report on those seasons was available at Maryland Historic Trust.

An intensive Phase I survey was conducted in January 1995 of a large parcel that adjoins site 18ST53. The Phase I survey was initiated ahead of proposed mining operations in that project area. In the original report, the authors stated that the Abell's Wharf site name and number were applied to all the artifacts collected and to the project area. It was determined by State archeologists that the 1995 survey area represented a continuation of site 18ST53. The northwest portion of the 1995 study area (Area 1) butts up against the 1975/76 study area and probably forms a continuation of the core site area identified in the 1970's. All that separates the 1975/6 and 1995 survey areas is a property boundary fence. Objectives of the 1995 archeological investigations were to locate all cultural resources within the project area, to delineate their approximate spatial boundaries and chronological and cultural affiliations, and to determine if any of those resources were potentially eligible for National Register listing.

The project area was divided into 6 fields for the purposes of the archeological survey. The dirt road system was used to designate boundaries for the fields. Grid north was established roughly parallel to the fields, with Breton Bay to the north. Background research indicated that 5 extant buildings located within the survey area were of modern construction. A 6th structure, a frame barn, dates to the 18th century according to local oral tradition but its construction suggested that it should be dated to the late 19th or early 20th century. The barn was once part of a large farmstead, whose main dwelling was located outside the project area to the east. The majority of the project area was cleared but fallow agricultural land. A series of 3.65-4.26 m (12'-14') wide swaths/transects were plowed across the fields with 18.28 m (60') intervals between the swaths. Transects were numbered and divided into 7.62 m (25') sections. All identified artifacts were recorded within each section and all artifacts were retained except for shell and fire-cracked rock which were counted with only a sample retained. A total of 25 shovel test pits were excavated, 17 in Fields A and B, 5 in Field C, and 3 in Field E.

A total of 1,082 oyster shells and shell fragments were recovered from the site but could not be definitively associated with either the prehistoric or the historic components. Oral tradition suggested that the shells were used in more recent times as part of farming practices and the shell appeared to be fairly un-weathered. However, only 1 historic artifact was found in association with each shell deposit identified within the project area, with the remaining artifacts prehistoric in origin. Due the uncertainty, they are not included in the totals in the table above.

A total of 634 prehistoric items were recovered during the 1995 field season. There were 482 pieces of debitage, 7 cores, and 5 preforms/blanks. There were 16 chipped stone tools including 3 uniface and 11 biface tools, 1 knife, and 1 endscraper. There were A total of 32 projectile points and points fragments were recovered including 2 Brewerton side-notched, 2 Morrow Mountain, 1 Snook Kill, 1 Calvert, 2 Selby Bay, and 24 unidentified types. There were 6 other lithic items including 2 tested cobbles, 1 abrading stone, 2 hammerstones, and 1 anvil/pitted stone (1 other anvil was discarded). A total of 84 FCR were retained,



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18ST53

Site Name: Abell's Wharf

Prehistoric ☒

Other name(s) Medley's Neck, Mattingly's Farm

Historic ☒

Brief Description:

Early-Late Archaic short-term camp, Early-Late Woodland shell midden, late 17th to mid-18th century farmstead

Unknown ☐

68 were discarded. There was 1 cord-marked and quartz tempered rim sherd. There were 2 possible modified faunal objects (mended pieces of worked bone).

A total of 66 historic artifacts were recovered during the 1995 field season. There were 2 activity items (horseshoes). There were 21 architectural items (6 brick fragments, 2 cut nails, 5 wire nails, 2 unidentified nails, 2 asbestos tiles, 2 modern ceramic tile, 2 ceramic drain pipe fragments). There were 34 kitchen-related items (5 fragments of (Colonial?) bottle glass, 5 glass jar fragments, 7 fragments of modern bottle glass, 5 gray stoneware sherds, 1 brown stoneware sherd, 6 pearlware sherds, 1 porcelain sherd, 1 redware sherd, 1 American Blue & Gray sherd, 1 bottle cap, and 1 animal bone fragment). There were 4 miscellaneous items (2 pieces of coal, 2 unidentified metal fragments). There were 3 personal items (1 plastic eyeglass frame piece, 1 clear glass bead, 1 blue glass bead). There was 1 tobacco item (a pipe bowl fragment). There was 1 arms item (a .45 caliber bullet casing).

Examinations of the distribution maps revealed 4 areas (Area 1-Area 4) of relatively concentrated prehistoric resources. Concentrations of debitage, FCR, and oyster shell were identified in the northwest quadrant of the study area designated as Area 1. STP excavation indicated that the artifacts were not confined to the plowzone and that there may be an extant living surface. In total, 37% of all the prehistoric materials recovered from the site derived from Area 1. Area 2 was located in the northern portion of the study area on a small rise in Field B. A scatter of FCR and a medium-sized cluster of lithic debitage and 4 points, but no oyster shell, were observed. Area 3, located in the northeastern section of the project area, contained a scatter of FCR and a small cluster of lithic debitage and 3 points, but no oyster shell. Area 4 was identified in the southeastern portion of the project area with STPs excavated around the extant barn. It consisted of a cluster of FCR, debitage, 4 points, and oyster shell. Based on the diagnostic material from the site, a Late Archaic component and a strong Early-Middle Woodland component are suggested. The historic artifacts dated from the 18th century to the present. They represent an artifact scatter rather than discrete concentrations of material. It was recommended that Area 1 and Area 4 should be subjected to Phase II testing.

Phase II testing at the site commenced in the summer of 1995. The goal of the survey was to evaluate resources in Area 1 and Area 4 as previously identified during the Phase I testing. Objectives were to determine if resources were present in the two areas, to evaluate the significance of materials recovered from Area 1 as they related to the Abell's Wharf site, and to determine the integrity of Area 4. An arbitrary grid north was established paralleling the fence line on the southwestern side of Area 1. All excavated soils were screened through 1/4" hardware cloth and all artifacts were retained. Test units measured 1 m².

Area 1 comprised approximately 4.5 acres. Northeast of the area, sand and gravel mining operations were in progress with the southeastern boundary of the area being the access road for the mining operations. A total of 5 test units and 14 STPs were excavated in Area 1. Two test units (TU3, TU4) were placed in the shell midden at the (grid) northern edge of the area, one test unit (TU1) was excavated near the center of the area on the top of a slight rise, and two test units (TU2, TU5) were placed in the vicinity of an artifact concentration at the (grid) southern end of the area. The soil stratification included only the plowzone layer above subsoil. The only exception was in TU2 and STP6 where an earlier plowzone layer was identified above the subsoil. A single lithic artifact was recovered from that layer. The only features encountered were plow scars in the northern end of in Area 1.

Area 4 comprised approximately 6.5 acres. Prior to the Phase II investigations the barn had been pushed into a pile of rubble at its western end. A total of 17 STPs were dug at 20 m intervals and 1 test unit (TU1) was excavated in Area 4. The densest concentration of artifacts was located at the southern end of the area. Within STP 8 an apparent feature (Feature 1) was encountered. TU1 was placed with STP 8 at its northwest corner. The feature was recorded in 10 cm arbitrary levels. The top of the feature was reached at about 30 cm below surface (cmbs). A gravel layer was reached at about 74 cmbs and the feature continued to about 83 cmbs into the gravel layer. Prehistoric ceramics (n=11), lithics, and charcoal, as well as large pieces of apparent bark, were recovered from the fill of Feature 1. The carbonized material was collected for archeobotanical identification and a charcoal sample was collected for C14 dating. The results of those analyses were not provided in the original report. It was determined that the feature had been truncated by plowing activities and therefore no remains of a living surface were expected to be encountered. Area 4 had also been disturbed by activities related to the construction and demolition of a 19th/20th century farm complex.

In all, a total of 647 artifacts were recovered during the Phase II investigations. The characters of the prehistoric assemblage from both areas are consistent with one another and with the materials from the rest of 18ST53; therefore, they were not reported separately. There were 362 pieces of debitage and 19 cores. There were 160 chipped stone tools including 70 retouched flakes, 68 utilized flakes, 19 biface tools, and 3 unidentified projectile points. There was 1 other lithic item (a cobble). There were 19 FCR. There were 12 unidentified ceramic sherds (some were thought to possibly be Mockley and Accokeek). There were 8 pieces of charcoal and 2 seeds. A total of 1, 121 oyster shell fragments were recovered from the 2 areas. 64 of those derived from Feature 1 and are therefore included in the prehistoric artifact total.

A total of 48 historic artifacts were also collected during the survey. There were 9 activity items recovered from Area 4 (skeet fragments). The 24 architectural items included 21 brick fragments collected from Area 1, and 2 pieces of flat glass and 1 brick fragment from Area 4. There were 8 kitchen items collected from Area 4 (bottle glass fragments). There were 7 miscellaneous items including 2 pieces of slate from Area 1, and 3 pieces of plastic and 2 unidentified metal objects from Area 4.

Although it was determined at the conclusion of the Phase II investigations that Areas 1 and 4 would yield little more significant information, their proximity to the core of 18ST53 indicated that any earth moving activities in those areas should be monitored. The mining company diverted its operations to avoid Area 1.

Excavations at Abell's Wharf (18ST53) revealed an extensive, multi-component prehistoric and historic site. The prehistoric component includes short-term camps possibly in the Early and Middle Archaic periods and the Late Woodland period. More intensive occupation appears to have occurred in the Late Archaic and Early and Middle Woodland phases of occupation. This is significant because it provides information on the shift from hunting and foraging to intensive oyster exploitation. The historic period resources are associated with a colonial homestead/ farmstead, and date from ca. AD 1690 to 1740. This provides an important source of information about 17th and 18th century building traditions and settlement and subsistence patterns in Southern Maryland. The Abell's Wharf Archeological Site was determined eligible for listing in the Maryland Register of Historic Places in 1986.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006387, 00006388, 00006389, 00006489, 00006517, 00006520, Site Files